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This study describes a survey given to school librarians regarding their participation in professional learning communities (PLCs). School librarians who are members of AASLForum and LM_Net were emailed the survey. The study was conducted to determine what roles the librarians are playing within professional learning communities and how those roles compare with American Association of School Librarian standards. There are currently no quantitative studies of librarian roles in PLCs.

PLCs are an increasingly common strategy used to improved student achievement by focusing on student learning rather than teaching. Of the librarians survey 110 participate in at least one PLC. The survey covers in what type of PLC librarians are participating and what the obstacles are for participating. Most librarians surveyed participate in core subject area PLCs, and they cite "time" as the biggest barrier to participation.

Headings:

School libraries

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SCHOOL LIBRARIAN PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

by
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Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are becoming more and more commonplace in schools across the country. The groups are made up of teachers and administrators that seek out and share learning and then act on that learning to improve instruction (Hord, 1997). The movement is seen as one having great potential and widespread adoption (Stoll & Louis, 2007). There is abundant literature on how to form these groups and the norms that need to be established. The literature details successful PLCs and presents data on how PLCs support student learning. Teachers, administrators, and librarians are typically participants in these groups, but little research exists as to the role librarians play within the PLC. This study seeks to establish what librarians are doing in PLCs, as well as determine obstacles that stand in the way of librarian participation.

Literature Review

In 1989, Susan Rosenholtz published *Teacher's Workplace: The Social Organization of Schools*, a book that explored the way teachers in elementary schools worked together. Her research found that teachers who feel supported through ongoing professional development, a collaborative work environment, and increased responsibility are more effective in their jobs at meeting student needs.

The idea that the teacher needs to be a continuous learner in order to best impact student learning grew throughout the 1990s as more focus was put on teaching according to student learning style. The move toward more testing and increased accountability of

"No Child Left Behind" gave learning communities more data to consider and the ability to evaluate if changes in instruction had an effect on student learning (Stoll & Louis, 2007). Providing teachers with more preparation, training, and autonomy was found to be key in getting improved student outcomes. The autonomy should include teachers participating in action research, setting standards, and "collaborative inquiry," as well as the time to do these things during the school day (Darling-Hammond, 1996).

An attempt to give teachers the support they needed and the opportunities to collaborate led to the development of the PLC (Hord, 1997). Teachers need capacity, "a complex blend of motivation, skill, positive learning, organisational conditions and culture, and infrastructure of support" in order to be most effective (Stoll et al, 2006). Not only does the PLC create a space for teachers to get what they need for success, it is also a sustainable model in which all school stakeholders--community members, administrators, staff, and librarians--can participate (Stoll, et al., 2006).

The term PLC became popular in the education with the publication of *Professional Learning Communities: Best Practices for Enhancing Student Achievement* by Richard DuFour and Robert Eaker in 1998. Members of a PLC practice and share a variety of instructional strategies, tools, experiences, data, and methods of approaching problems (Wenger, 2006). Seen as an alternative to teachers working in isolation, most definitions of PLC include members who work collaboratively, are reflective, and who are learner-centered. A successful PLC is self-sustaining and taken seriously by its members (Stoll & Louis, 2007). Conflicts within the PLC structure are dealt with openly and with the groups help (Hord & Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2004).

The members of PLCs can vary, but almost always involve teachers. The involvement of teaching assistants, non-teaching staff, community members, administrators, central office staff, and parents varies from site to site (Stoll & Louis, 2006). PLCs may also extend beyond the walls of a school and be made up of people from different schools, districts, or it can also be a virtual PLC made up of people who may be unable to meet together in person. Within a school, a PLC may be made up of teams of the same grade or subject-area. These groupings often make it easier to plan collaborative units, share lesson plans, create assessments, and examine data because there is already a shared subject area or the participants are teaching the same students.

Special area teachers who are often the only one of their type in a building—librarian, art teacher, band teachers, physical education teacher, etc.— will come together and form a PLC. At times, these special area teachers may also belong to a district-level PLC. It is not unusual for the school to meet periodically in whole group to ensure the school vision is clear. PLC time should not be used for administrative matters like announcements.

The characteristics of a PLC are said to be "essential to the sustained improvement of any organization" (Eaker, DuFour, & DuFour, 2002). There are five attributes typically associated with PLCs. Administrators are expected to give *supportive and shared leadership* by offering staff members decision-making opportunities and giving other staff members the chance to lead and have authority. There is a *collective creativity* where ideas are shared and staff work together to solve problems, plan, and learn. The PLC needs *shared values and vision* in which the goals for PLCs are clear and the norms for how to participate are standard. There must be *supportive conditions* within

PLCs. On the small-scale, individual PLCs must have a relationship of trust and comfort to share successes and failures. At the larger level, there must be a structure in place to protect PLC time and to set the tone for what is expected in the PLCs. Finally, there should be *shared personal practice* with peers observing one another, sharing feedback, offering critical suggestions for better practice and giving encourage all with the end result of better student learning in mind (Stoll & Louis, 2006). To be most effective, PLCs require full staff participation, supportive and participatory administration, and a shared vision of increased student achievement (Buffum & Hinman, 2006 and Hord, 1997).

There is significant evidence that shows the formation of PLCs improves student achievement at low performing schools (Hord & Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2004). Data from 11,000 students from 820 secondary schools across the country gathered by the Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools revealed that those schools that had organized into PLCs had greater student achievement in math, science, history, and reading (Hord & Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2004). PLCs have been shown to increase student achievement and reduce gaps in learning between students of different backgrounds. Some schools also report more students present for school and fewer cut classes (Hord, 1997).

Within the data from the Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools, Hord (2004) identifies four factors that led to increased student achievement that are also supported by PLCs. The first of the factors is "student learning" where teachers agree on an authentic learning experience where students use higher order thinking skills to complete learning tasks and those learning goals are clearly communicated to students

and to parents. "Authentic pedagogy" is the second factor supported by PLCs. Within their learning communities, teachers are able to develop a method of instruction and assessment that supports their students and minimizes the effects of students' upbringing or experience. The "organizational capacity" of a school staff to work together is another important factor with a shared responsibility for student learning at the forefront. Finally, a school needs "external support" in the form of a sufficient budget, parental support, and governmental support (Hord & Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2004).

The teaching impact from PLCs results in tasks that take higher level thinking skills. Teachers also reported higher morale and an improved attendance rate (Hord & Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2004). Teaching performance is found to improve with the autonomy of PLCs (Stoll & Louis, 2007). Teachers have the power to meet together and make changes and then see the results of their work through the data they collect. The PLC uses action research and inquiry to improve their professional practice and determine the most appropriate techniques to use in the classroom (Eaker, DuFour & DuFour, 2002). Teachers involved in PLCs feel a sense of responsibility to make substantial and sustainable change in their school, which often leads to changes system-wide (Harris & Jones, 2010).

These impacts are, of course, limited to schools with effective PLCs that exhibit the attributes recognized by Hord (1997). Schools must have full participation with system-wide support, the locus of the PLC must be improving teaching in order to improve student learning, and research and results observed within the school must fuel the changes (Harris & Jones, 2010). For the school to be transformed there must be a

collective agreement to cooperate and use the PLC system, trusting one another and buying in.

The attractiveness of PLCs may be the relationships formed out of the creative work and the shared vision of the group (Stoll & Louis, 2006). But why is the PLC model so popular right now? One theory is that fast-changing technology, changing corporate structures, and the world literally at one's finger tips creates an overwhelming task for teachers (Stoll & Louis, 2006). Facing the changing world in isolation is denying and in direct opposition to globalization. The collective brain of the internet is also influencing the way people see one another as sources of information. The PLC model brings minds together as one as seeing in cloud computing, message boards, forums, wiki's, and Twitter. The difference in PLCs is that the focus of the group's work and study is to solve the problems of their specific schools and students (Stoll & Louis, 2006). The hub of resources, information, and technology in a school is the school media center.

The entire school faculty is expected to participate in PLCs, the librarian included. The standards set forth by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) in *Empowering Learners: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs* (2009) are very closely aligned to the goals of a PLC. The librarian can "lead from the center" (p. 19) by working directly with teachers at the PLC level (AASL, 2009). One can see the connection when aligning the goals for school library media programs and those of the PLC.

First, the exemplary media program is learner-centered. The standards emphasize an inquiry-based approach to teaching and learning where the student constructs his own learning by using prior knowledge to gather new information and come to a new

understanding (AASL, 2009). The model PLC is also learner-centered, which is different from past school reform programs that were teaching-centered.

The library should also reflect the "mission, goals, and objectives of the school" (p. 29) (AASL, 2009). The librarian creates a program to fit the school using both qualitative and quantitative data to create policies and a vision. In the PLC model, it is essential for the school to have a shared vision, mission, and values.

A culture of collaboration is expected from librarians in the standards. The media specialist is expected to work with classroom teachers to "design, implement, and evaluate inquiry lessons and units (p. 20)" (AASL, 2009). The PLC is a natural way for the librarian to become involved in collaboration. The librarian and library staff are in the unique position of serving the entire school and staff through the library. Being a figure that has access to so many resources, as well as the opportunity to communicate with students and faculty through the media center, the librarian is in a key position to be involved in PLCs.

The units designed by librarians and teachers should be "inquiry-driven," according to the AASL standards (20). One of the goals for PLCs is also to provide inquiry-based lessons (Darling-Hammond, 1996 and Eaker, DuFour & DuFour, 2002). The constructivist theory of learning puts students in the driver's seat for their learning while giving the opportunity to assess their own work throughout the process. Students use their prior knowledge to help address new questions, and come to new understandings (AASL, 2009).

The second half of the constructivist theory involves assessment. The assessment of students should be used for students to shape the next step in their learning so they

might see where there are gaps. However, the data should also inform the instructor about the effectiveness of the instruction and whether or not standards were met. The librarian must be a reflective practitioner and this reflection should be daily to improve instruction (AASL, 2009). Teachers and librarians working together should work throughout a unit to assess how well students are learning. When a librarian makes a mistake, it should be a learning experience and an area in which to grow (Zmuda & Harada, 2008). Student assessment informs instruction, and the information gathered can be used to build new knowledge for the teacher and librarian when they teach and plan together in the future (AASL, 2009). Finding the best learning strategies and using those and adapting creates change not only on the building level, but it can bring change at a system level.

Roles of the School Librarian in a PLC

The various roles of the school librarian are fundamental in examining the roles of the librarian within PLCs, and they were the basis for the line of questioning in the survey administered. The roles addressed here are found throughout the literature.

Information Specialist

The librarian is an information specialist, finding tools, acquiring access, and removing obstacles for teacher and student learning (Gilmore-See, 2010). The AASL identifies this role as using technology tools, creating learning experiences along with teachers, connecting the school with the world through technology, and providing around the clock access to the media center. The information specialist brings in new models and demonstrates their use whether it be technology, pedagogy, research, or assessment strategies (AASL, 2009). The librarian then brings these resources to PLC to share and

present. Ideally, the librarian would be a member of the PLC and be able to anticipate the needs of the group. The librarian would also be familiar with the topics of discussion and can pinpoint certain needs that may affect collection in the library. The librarian may be able to suggest resources that teachers begin to gather on their own, such as subscribing to certain blogs or following a particular person on Twitter.

Staff Developer

The school librarian also works in the role of staff developer, organizing or facilitating staff training on the large- and small-scale. In *The Many Faces of School Library Leadership*, Janice Gilmore-See writes, "Providing learning opportunities for professional educators is at the core of the PLC." Because the librarian is expected to communicate with the whole staff and its PLCs and to know the curriculum of the school, he or she is uniquely positioned to be aware of what professional development teachers may want and need (2010). The focus of professional development is taken off trying to provide "one size fits all" training. Trainings might be smaller, come at point-of-need, and may be on-going as a group peruses a particular topic.

Critical Friend and Reflective Learner

The librarian also plays the role of a critical friend, providing feedback to PLC members about instruction, planning, and assessment. In schools, lesson plans are often not reviewed by administrators or by colleagues, and the PLC offers an opportunity for this reflective process to take place (McTighe, 2007). The librarian can help lead and model the practice for teachers who may be nervous receiving or giving feedback to other teachers. The librarian can also help to develop and research standardized practices for critical feedback so that it is kept professional and not personal. Reflection improves a

professional's practice and cultivates learning (Hughes-Hassell & Harada, 2007). Because PLCs are focused on student learning, there is real-life, student data available to make determinations about practice.

Collaborator and Teaching Partner

The librarian is a collaborator within the school, knowing well the resources available. Librarians also have no specific grade level, nor department allegiances, so he or she can help plan units that integrate a variety of curriculum areas. The librarian can also participate in developing curriculum (AASL, 2009). The participation of the media specialist also ensures equitable sharing of resources and ensures the schedule of the media center and the availability of resources will coincide with need (Woolls, 2008). Units are planned to incorporate media literacy and technology standards, ethical use of information, as well as to foster inquiry-based learning (AASL, 2009).

When collaborating, the librarian can also implement assessment strategies throughout a unit (AASL, 2009). The librarian can also offer resources to the teacher for alternative assessment methods (Woolls, 2008). By working together the librarian and the teacher have a plan for what students are expected to learn and the path students are expected to take to accomplish the goals (Harada & Yoshina, 2005). This allows the librarian to directly contribute to student success.

The librarian often plays the role of technology trainer (Gilmore-See, 2010). The librarian might model a new technology, set-up accounts for teacher exploration, or help to determine the potential of a new technology tool for a variety of content areas. Technology is often housed in the library, managed by the librarian, and was purchased by the librarian, so it is a natural role for the librarian to train others to use the tools in a

PLC. The training can include, not only how to use the tool, but how the tool will impact student learning, how the tool will help students construct knowledge and build understanding.

When teaching, the librarian supports student reading, guides the use of information, helps students build their own knowledge, teaches reflective practices, encourages peer-editing, and models numerous technologies and communication tools to reach a broader world (AASL, 2009).

Leader

In taking on the role of leader, the librarian is also taking on the role of listener. The PLC is where the librarian can go to hear the concerns, needs, and ideas of teachers and staff, and develop relationships with those people (AASL, 2009). Shared vision is an important aspect of PLCs. When the librarian acts as a leader, sharing his or her library vision with the group, the PLC can begin to see how that vision relates to each person's own professional goals (Kearney, 2000).

Being a leader in PLC may mean being prepared and anticipating questions or issues before the meeting. The librarian may be a curriculum leader and help teachers see beyond their own standards (Woolls, 2008). The librarian may also be the first to volunteer to use a new teaching practices or technology tool in order to model the strategy or to troubleshoot it.

Student Advocate

With access to a number of assistive technologies like portable amplifiers, captioned videos, or print-enlarging computers, the librarian can be student advocates by helping teachers foresee needs of students with disabilities in a particular unit. The media

specialist can meet with special education teachers to determine alternative teaching strategies that can be applied across the curriculum and shared in PLC (Hughes-Hassell & Harada, 2007). By working with PLCs, the librarian can become aware of the learning styles of students and take these into consideration by ordering appropriate resources and making them available in the media center, as well as making teachers aware of the resources available to address different learning styles (Kearney, 2000).

Rationale

The literature on the participation of librarians in PLCs is limited to what librarians should be doing (in the case of the standards in *Empowering Learners*) and what librarians could do to contribute.

Librarians can bring professional development opportunities and professional resources for teachers to support pedagogy, as well as to support the formation and effectiveness of PLCs. One of the articles detailing these roles is by Dianne Dees, et al., in a brief piece about librarians as leaders in PLCs (2010). The librarian can also provide technology support and suggestions for incorporating technology into lessons. The piece focuses on the librarian's "whole school view," which gives the librarian a significant role in PLCs.

Susan Pennell in her article for *California School Library Association Journal* echoes these roles and adds that librarians should be involved with teachers when planning units from the beginning through to the final evaluation (Pennell, 2008).

PLCs are effective in ending teacher isolation, but librarians can reduce their own isolation by participating in PLCs with other librarians within their own building or

within a district. This PLC network can be expanded by creating a virtual PLC (Jaeger, 2010).

There is no quantitative research of what librarians are doing in PLCs. The above articles that do connect librarians to PLCs only speak from anecdotal evidence or a look at the standards for librarians. There is nothing in the literature about what, if anything, may keep some librarians from participating fully when PLCs are present in their school. This study is designed to fill some of the gaps in the literature and provide the field with more information for future studies.

Methodology

To help determine what school librarians are doing in professional learning communities, an online survey was administered to members of the AASL (AASL) who elect to receive the AASLForum listserv. The mission of the AASL is to support the profession of school librarianship by providing access to best practices, research, and trends in the field. The AASL links together professionals into a community. The listserv is a way to contact this community all at once. This sample group was selected because it represents a broad group of librarians who serve many grade levels across the United States. Only members of AASL are able to view or post to the forum, and one must be a member of the American Library Association first before joining the AASL. There are 692 members of AASL forum.

The survey was also sent to LM_NET members. LM_NET is a discussion group in the form of a listserv for school librarians and people associated with school libraries. The list is managed through Syracuse University and has more than 12,000 members.

This sample group was selected for the same reasons as AASLForum—it has broad membership.

An email invitation was sent to members of the AASLForum and LM_NET to respond to the survey. The invitation included a message of consent to participate in the survey. A link in the posting sent respondents to the web-based survey where a second message of consent was displayed. The survey was hosted by Qualtrics, a web-based survey tool.

The survey is made up of items derived from the literature describing a librarian's role in a PLC. The survey begins with demographic data collected in order to determine any differences that exist based on grade level, school size, size of library staff, librarian experience, and school district size.

It is expected that results will show a diversity of participation in PLCs, and it is within reason to hypothesize that certain demographic factors may influence these differences. For example, scheduling in secondary schools may allow for more shared planning time than the scheduling in primary schools, so we may see differences among grade levels.

School enrollment and staff size may affect a school's ability to break into or organize PLCs. Very small schools may feel they have insufficient staff to have effective PLCs or very large schools may have difficulty scheduling shared planning time for PLCs. The location of a school may affect its PLC model with smaller, more rural districts not having a central office that requires PLCs. A larger district may have more resources to provide training for developing PLCs. The number of students receiving free

and reduced lunch may also reflect the resources of a school. Differences in these areas may offer information about how these variables affect, or not, PLC participation.

Items were included to determine librarian experience within their current school, as well as in the profession to determine if those play a role in PLC participation. PLCs require relationships and trust, so does a librarian's experience in the job or time at the school play a role?

Extensive PLC participation can require a great deal of time from a librarian, and a flexible schedule is also helpful for flexible meeting times. Items were included to determine if having a library assistant affects the librarian's ability to more fully participate in PLCs or if there is a difference for those with flexible versus fixed scheduling.

A filter question: "Is PLC participation required at your school?" was included to route those who have no PLCs at their school to items that relate to other types of PLCs and to PLCs in general. Those who do have PLCs within their school were asked to specifically list the PLCs in which they participate. This item will be used to determine what types of PLCs librarians participate in like leadership, technology, core subjects, special areas, or literacy.

As discussed in the literature review, there are a number of roles the librarian is proposed to play within a PLC. Survey respondents who indicated their school had PLCs were given a number of statements to which they could reply how often they perform these roles within the PLC on a 4-point Likert scale. Participants were also asked to respond to a question of how they communicate with PLCs in their school to determine if different communication methods reflect differences in participation.

The next section on the survey contains items that ask librarian opinions and feelings towards PLCs, as well as to discuss obstacles to PLC participation. Items in this section may help inform responses gathered in previous sections.

Finally, as mentioned in the literature review, librarians are encouraged to connect with others in the profession through PLCs, and the survey contains items relevant to their participation in these PLCs. (See Survey, Appendix A)

The survey was open for 10 days. Participants were sent an email 7 days after the initial call for participation, reminding of the closure date.

Once the survey window was closed, educational research methods were used to analyze the data. Patterns in the data are presented as appropriate in table form. Descriptive statistics are provided. As this study is exploratory in nature and results will not be generalized to larger populations, inferential statistics were not used. The results reflect only the survey respondents and are not trend projections of librarians at-large.

Results

Characteristics of respondents

While the exact number of librarians invited to take the survey is unknown, the final results show that 210 participants completed at least some of the survey and 169 participants completed the entire survey. Librarians serving all grade levels were represented, with an even distribution across all grade levels. Each grade level is served by at least 38% of participants, except for pre-Kindergarten (served by 23% of participants).

Participants represent a wide range of school sizes, with 56% representing schools with students enrollment from 200-800. Large schools were better represented that small schools, with 13% of respondents representing schools with enrollments over 1400 and 3% representing schools of fewer than 200 students. Urban schools (13%) were underrepresented compared to suburban (49%) and rural (33%) schools. The participants serve at schools with a range of economic profiles, with the plurality (42%) of librarians surveyed responding that, to their knowledge, fewer than 20% of students at their school receive free or reduced lunch (FRL). 34% responded that between 20 and 50% of students receive FRL, and 25% responded that over 50% of their students receive FRL.

The librarians surveyed also represent a wide range of experience, with current-school tenures ranging from 0 – 35 years. The mean tenure at the librarians' current schools was 6.8 years, and the median tenure was 4 years. Similarly, the career lengths of librarians surveyed were wide-ranging, with a minimum of zero years, a maximum of 39 years, mean of 12.4 years, and a median of 12 years. The means and medians show that the participants in this survey were, on average, experienced librarians rather than ones new to the field.

Results showed that 58% of respondents have at least one library assistant and that 80% of respondents have either a flexible schedule or a hybrid fixed/flexible schedule.

Participation in PLCs

Participation in PLCs is required for all staff at 39% of schools represented. PLC participation is optional at 42% of respondents' schools, and 19% of respondents report that there are no PLCs at their school. Of the 81 respondents who reported that PLC

participation at their school is optional, 57% reported that they participate in at least one PLC at their school. Participants in the survey were also asked about participation in PLCs specifically for librarians. Of the 179 surveyed who responded to the question, 132 (74%) indicated that they participate in a librarian PLC. Of these, the vast majority(114) participate in a PLC for librarians outside of their school or online, while 18 participate in one within their school—most likely in schools with more than one librarian.

In order to see any potential effects of demographic factors on PLC participation, the responses of the 81 librarians who reported that PLC participation was optional were analyzed (Table 1). As the survey samples were not randomly obtained, results cannot be generalized to any population outside that of the respondents themselves. With that in mind, statistical significance was not calculated for any results from the survey. Percentages obtained only reflect true differences in the responses of survey respondents, not projections of trends among school librarians at large.

Table 1: Librarian participation in PLCs when participation is optional n=81

	No. Librarians Responding	**No. Participating in PLCs**	**Percentage**
School Enrollment			
Under 200	4	1	*25%*
201-500	20	10	50%
501-811	13	7	54%
801-1100	16	12	**75%**
1101-1400	13	7	54%
Greater than 1400	14	8	57%
# of Teachers at School			
Fewer than 10	0	0	N/A
11-20	12	5	*42%*
21-40	16	7	*44%*
41-60	16	11	**69%**
More than 60	35	22	**63%**

**Percentages greater than 10% above the overall average participation rate of 57% are in bold. Percentages lower than 10% below the overall participation rate of 57% are in italics.*

Table 1 (con't)

	No. Librarians Responding	No. Participating in PLCs	Percentage
School Setting			
Urban	11	6	55%
Suburban	42	26	**62%**
Rural	28	14	50%
Percentage of Students on FRL			
Less than 20%	37	23	**62%**
21-50%	26	14	54%
Greater than 50%	18	9	50%
Schedule Type			
Flexible	46	28	**61%**
Fixed	18	10	56%
Hybrid	16	7	*44%*
Primary Grades Served			
Pre-K	Many librarians served multiple grade levels, so the percentages are an average by grouped grade level.		**69%**
K-5			55%
6-8			56%
9-12			**65%**
Experience			
0-4 Years	15	7	47%
5-9 Years	23	15	**65%**
10-19 Years	25	14	56%
20 or More Years	18	10	56%
Tenure at Current School			
0-4 Years	40	22	55%
5-9 Years	18	12	**67%**
10 or More Years	23	12	52%

**Percentages greater than 10% above the overall average participation rate of 57% are in bold. Percentages lower than 10% below the overall participation rate of 57% are in italics.*

The number of students enrolled at a school does not appear to be strongly associated with librarian PLC participation. Only 25% of librarians at schools with an enrollment of fewer than 200 students participate, but the extremely small sample size prevents much from being taken from the result. Likewise, 75% of librarians at schools

with enrollments of between 801 and 1100 students participate, but it is unlikely that this is a unique factor to this particular school size that does not occur in schools slightly larger or smaller. Although no pattern seems to exist in school enrollment, there does appear to be a pattern of increasing PLC participation as faculty size increases. There is a distinct difference between librarians from schools with 40 or fewer classroom teachers and schools with more than 40 classroom teachers in terms of PLC participation. Other school characteristics may also play a role in PLC participation as well - librarians at suburban schools and schools with fewer than 20% of students on FRL report higher rates of PLC participation than those in other categories. The grade levels served by a librarian exhibited an interesting relationship with PLC participation, with Pre-K and High School librarians considerably more likely to participate than elementary and middle school librarians.

In addition to characteristics of the librarians' schools, characteristics of the librarians themselves also showed differences between categories. Librarians with a flexible schedule were slightly more likely to participate than librarians with a fixed schedule, and considerably more likely to participate than librarians with a hybrid schedule. Librarian experience, both overall and at their current school, showed a relationship with PLC participation. Librarians with 5-9 years of experience were the group most likely to participate, as were librarians with 5-9 years of experience at their current school.

Librarians' Roles in PLCs

Survey respondents were asked to rate the frequency with which various statements regarding the suggested roles of librarians in PLCs applied to them. Results

from the 110 librarians who indicated participation in at least one PLC are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2. Percentage of respondents selecting "Often" or "Sometimes" for PLC Tasks n=110

PLC Task	Often/ Sometimes	Affiliated Role
Provide knowledge to PLC members by providing relevant professional literature and research.	84%	Information Specialist
Take responsibility for extra assignments from the PLC, above and beyond what is normally expected.	76%	Leader
Help teachers integrate technology into their instruction.	74%	Information Specialist
Provide honest, positive and/or critical feedback to PLC members regarding instruction or planning.	73%	Critical Friend & Reflective Learner
Prepare for meetings by reading professional literature to anticipate topics or "jump start" conversation.	66%	Information Specialist
Co-plan a unit with a teacher(s) in a PLC.	63%	Collaborator & Teaching Partner
Offer alternative teaching strategies or assessment strategies to address different learning styles or needs.	63%	Student Advocate
Teach a portion of a unit co-planned with a teacher.	60%	Collaborator & Teaching Partner
Provide mini-lessons or training to a PLC at their request to address a specific need.	49%	Staff Developer
Meet with a PLC after the completion of a collaboratively taught unit to refine lessons or make adjustments to the unit plan for future practice.	45%	Critical Friend & Reflective Learner
Create an assessment(s) within a PLC.	40%	Collaborator & Teaching Partner
Set the agenda for a PLC meeting.	36%	Leader

Eight of the 12 tasks were performed at least "sometimes" by over 50% of responding librarians, with providing mini-lessons, exchanging feedback after a lesson, creating assessments, and agenda-setting as the least-performed tasks. When examining the prevalence of the various roles taken by librarians in a PLC, one can view the results in Table 2 in two different ways, as seen in Table 3. If one believes that the performance of all tasks within a given role is essential to the performance of that role, then the mean participation rate should be used to compare roles. Using that paradigm, the role of Information Specialist is the one most taken by responding librarians, followed, in order, by Student Advocate, Critical Friend & Reflective Learner, Leader, Collaborator & Teaching Partner, and Staff Developer. If, on the other hand, one believes that performing one key task is sufficient to the performance of a role, then the ordering of roles as in Table 2 produces an accurate rank. Under that paradigm, Information Specialist is still the most prevalent role, followed in order by Leader, Critical Friend & Reflective Learner, Collaborator & Teaching Partner, Student Advocate, and Staff Developer. Under both paradigms, Information Specialist is the most common and Staff Developer is the least common.

Table 3. Prevalence of Roles in PLCs

Rank	Performance of all tasks are necessary to fill role	Performance of only one key task is sufficient to fill role
1	Information Specialist	Information Specialist
2	Student Advocate	Leader
3	Critical Friend	Critical Friend
4	Leader	Collaborator
5	Collaborator	Student Advocate
6	Staff Developer	Staff Developer

Due to the diversity in role popularity among librarians who indicated PLC participation, various demographic factors were cross-tabulated with the prevalence of the roles to determine if any relationships existed, the full results of which can be found in Appendix B. Few patterns were found that suggest strong trends, but there were a few noteworthy exceptions:

- Librarians in schools with the fewest classroom teachers were considerably more likely to perform the information specialist role than their colleagues at larger schools, and 100% reported providing knowledge to PLC members by providing relevant professional literature and research.
- Librarians in schools with >50% FRL, librarians in urban schools, and librarians with high levels of experience and/or tenure at their schools were extremely likely (>90%) to provide knowledge to PLC members by providing relevant professional literature and research.
- Librarians at urban schools were much more likely that their peers to perform the student advocate role, at 82% vs. 60% at suburban schools and 54% at rural schools. Similarly, librarians at schools with >50% FRL were also much more likely than their peers to perform the student advocate role.
- Librarians at schools with high rates of FRL are less likely than their peers to perform the role of Collaborator & Teaching Partner.
- Career experience seems related to the Collaborator & Teaching Partner role, as librarians with the most experience are more likely than their peers to perform these tasks. Tenure at the school, however, does not appear related.

- Librarians with a fixed schedule are far less likely than their peers to perform the role of Collaborator & Teaching Partner.
- Librarians in high-FRL schools and librarians with a fixed schedule are far less likely than their peers to meet with a PLC after the completion of a collaboratively taught unit to refine lessons or make adjustments to the unit plan for future practice.
- Librarians in urban schools perform the tasks related to the Leadership role less often than their peers.
- Librarians with 0-4 years of experience were less likely than their peers to take a Staff Development role in PLCs.
- Librarians with fixed schedules were more likely than their peers to "never" perform the following tasks: Prepare for meetings by reading professional literature to anticipate topics or "jump start" conversation; provide mini-lessons or training to a PLC at their request to address a specific need; co-plan a unit with a teacher(s) in a PLC; create an assessment(s) within a PLC; help teachers integrate technology into their instruction; teach a portion of a unit co-planned with a teacher; and meet with a PLC after the completion of a collaboratively taught unit to refine lessons or make adjustments to the unit.
- Across the board, librarians at the highest- and lowest-enrollment schools tend to take on the roles at a higher rate than their peers at more moderate-sized schools. Librarians at mid-sized schools are also much more likely to "never" perform most of the tasks.

In summary, multiple factors related to both the school and the librarian may be associated with the roles librarians take in their PLCs, but true randomized samples should be surveyed before any strong conclusions are drawn.

How Librarians Keep Up With PLC Happenings

Respondents were asked how they keep up with PLC happenings at their school. In all, 158 librarians reported that PLCs were in place at their school, and their responses are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4. How librarians keep up with PLC happenings
n-158

Attend school improvement team meetings, or leadership meetings	47%
Minutes and agendas are distributed through email	34%
Meet regularly with PLC team leaders	32%
Other	25%
Minutes and agendas are posted to a management system like Blackboard, etc.	15%

As seen in Table 4, school improvement team and leadership meetings are the most popular way librarians keep up with PLC happenings, and very few schools post minutes and agendas to a management system. 25% of respondents indicated that they keep up through a non-listed method. Of those, the most common experience is that librarians are unaware of the activities of other PLCs, or that they keep up through e-mail and/or word of mouth.

PLC Type

Respondents were asked to name the PLCs in which they actively participate. Of respondents who indicate that they participate in at least one PLC, responses were analyzed and coded into seven categories: core subjects (English, Math, etc.), Specialists (Art, Communications, etc.), Leadership (School Improvement Team, etc.), Technology,

Literacy, Community-focused (at-risk students, etc.), and non-traditional (reserved for PLCs that do not meet the standard definition of a PLC, but respondents listed as a PLC). Each PLC named was coded, and the number of librarians participating in a PLC category was divided by the total number of librarians who participate in at least one PLC.

Table 5. Prevalence of PLC type

Core Subjects	43%
Leadership	28%
Specialists	23%
Technology	16%
Literacy	14%
Nontraditional	9%
Community Focused	3%

Benefits and Obstacles of PLCs

Librarians surveyed were asked what they saw as the greatest benefits of PLC participation. The results are shared in Table 6. The values indicate the percentage of the 110 PLC-active librarians that indicate that a potential benefit is true for them.

Table 6. Perceived benefits of PLC participation
n=110

Professional growth	85%
Shared vision and goals within the school	76%
Increased communication among staff	72%
Collaborative atmosphere	68%
Improved student achievement	65%
Building relationships	64%
Less isolation	63%
Personal growth	55%
Focus on the student	51%
Shared responsibility	51%
Focus on results	42%
Feeling supported by the administration	41%
Time is well spent, as results are valuable	39%

In addition to the categories listed in Table 6, 13 respondents indicated that the greatest benefit they receive from PLC participation falls under the category of "other." These respondents were asked to describe the benefit, and one particularly interesting benefit to arise from this item was that PLCs provide "an important way to be seen as valuable."

Whether they indicated participation in a PLC or not, respondents were asked to indicate what they perceive to be the biggest obstacles to PLC participation. Responses are shown in Table 7. Obstacles listed in the "other" category include non-acceptance of librarians in teacher PLCs and the demands of covering classes for teachers in PLCs.

Table 7. Perceived obstacles to PLC participation
N=169

Time	46%
Demands of the media center	38%
Unfamiliarity with the role of the librarian in PLCs	24%
Lack of administrative support	17%
None. There are no obstacles.	14%
Fixed scheduling	11%
Lack of interest	7%
Don't see a role for the librarian in classroom teacher PLCs	7%
Lack of success in the past	3%
Lack of confidence	2%

As discussed in the section on roles librarians take within PLCs, librarians with fixed schedules are considerably more likely to "never" perform many of the tasks associated with the prescribed roles. In order to examine potential reasons for this relationship, schedule type was cross-tabulated with perceived obstacles. Results are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Perceived Obstacles by schedule type
n=169

Obstacle	Schedule Type		
	Flexible	**Fixed**	**Hybrid**
Time	39%	61%	48%
Demands of the media center	39%	32%	39%
Unfamiliarity with the role of the librarian in PLCs	23%	23%	27%
Lack of administrative support	20%	29%	5%
None. There are no obstacles.	22%	3%	7%
Fixed scheduling	2%	39%	11%
Lack of interest	6%	10%	7%
Don't see a role for the librarian in classroom teacher PLCs	6%	10%	7%
Lack of success in the past	1%	6%	5%
Lack of confidence	1%	3%	2%

Not surprisingly, librarians on fixed schedules list time as a major obstacle to participation in PLCs, and are much less likely than their peers to claim no obstacles to PLC participation.

Discussion

PLC Participation

With 39% of respondents reporting that PLCs were required and another 19 percent reporting no PLCs at their school, the remaining respondents were considered to determine librarian participation in PLCs by choice. Of the 81 respondents who reported that PLCs were optional, only 57 percent participate in a PLC at their school. With the AASL standards focusing considerably on inquiry-based instruction and collaboration, as well as the goals of PLCs being similar, one may wonder where these librarians are creating the relationships to sustain an ideal program. Because the PLCs are optional, and there is not whole school participation, the conditions may not be ideal for the librarian to be active in the groups. The optional PLCs may lack administrative support or district level support that might better facilitate librarian participation. The optional PLCs may

also be independently formed and then not all have a shared vision or goals, making it difficult for a librarian to navigate within the different PLC cultures. The librarian may need to do extra leg work to reach out to PLCs that are not organized in the whole school and find ways to more efficiently fulfill ideal roles.

The size of school faculty has an increasing pattern of PLC participation by librarians when PLC participation is optional. Schools of fewer than 40 teachers have less than 45% participation, but schools with between 41 and 60 teachers have 69% participation and schools with more than 60 teachers have 63% participation. Larger schools may have more PLCs and thus more opportunity for the librarian to find PLCs that make sense in the library mission. More PLCs may also give the librarian opportunity to have more successful PLC encounters or to work with a different PLC if one is found to not be a good fit. There may also be multiple librarians at larger schools, which may permit for a more flexible schedule for librarians to take turns attending PLCs and working in the media center.

Optional PLC participation is also higher at schools with fewer than 20% of students on FRL and at suburban schools. Increased parental support in a school with more resources may make it easier for PLCs to meet. Community and system-wide support can help create the time needed for librarian participation in PLCs by providing library assistants or volunteers to monitor the library. More affluent school populations may also reflect a larger school budget that can support PLCs with resources and professional development that might be coordinated by the librarian.

Librarians with flexible schedules were slightly more likely (61%) to participate in optional PLCs than those with a fixed schedule (56%). The surprising result was that

only 44% of librarians with a hybrid schedule are participating in optional PLCs in their school. The unique and varying ways in which a hybrid schedule may be manifested makes it difficult to make a conjecture as to why this difference exists.

An area that may warrant further research or could also be a random artifact of the data is the participation of librarians with tenure of 5-9 years at their current school or 5-9 years experience as a librarian. Those groups were more likely to participate in optional PLCs than their more or less experienced counterparts.

When it comes to PLCs for librarians, 74% of all respondents reported participation in a librarian PLC. Most of those (86%) were in PLCs outside of their school either in person or virtually. Further research may be needed to determine how the online PLCs function, and if the PLC is a true PLC or are actually professional development, tips and tricks, or point-of-need advice forums. Only 14% are able to meet in PLCs with other librarians within their own school, which may also reflect practitioners who are the only media specialist at their school.

Librarians' Roles in PLCs

The literature suggests several different roles the school librarian may play in PLCs. The survey focused on 6 of these roles: information specialist, leader, collaborator and teaching partner, critical friend and reflective learner, student advocate, and staff developer. Of those who indicated participation in at least one PLC, 84% indicated they "Often" or "Sometimes" provide professional literature to PLC members (Table 2). This was the top response from this section of the survey. This role of information specialist was the one most taken by survey respondents, with 66% also indicating they read professional journals and prepared for meetings by anticipating topics to be discussed and

74% reporting they help teachers integrate technology into their lessons. In *Empowering Learners*, the text indicates that the role of information specialist ranked 2nd in a survey of media specialists who were describing their current roles and predicting their future roles in the media center (2009). While the librarians who answered that survey placed the information specialist role second, the librarians surveyed reported this role as the one they take most often in PLCs (Table 3).

Librarians did not rank leader as a current or future role in the AASL survey, but the role is mentioned in the literature (2009). The role of leader is second when all survey questions regarding roles are considered, as 76% of respondents report taking on additional responsibilities beyond what is expected of members. In contrast, when considering both questions about leadership the rank drops to fourth. For librarians in urban schools, the leadership role was less likely to be performed than it is at suburban and rural schools. In contrast, the role of staff developer ranks last when considering either perspective for rankings. Training other staff members is also a type of leadership role that empowers staff members. A closer look at how PLC members are learning and where their professional development comes from is warranted here.

The highest ranking role librarians named for the future was that of instructional partner (AASL, 2009). In this study, the collaborative role ranks fifth if all questions of collaboration on the survey are considered and fourth if one only considers one task, which in this case in co-planning a unit with a teacher (63%). While the samples for neither survey can be applied to librarians at-large because the samples were not randomly selected among all librarians, it appears that within PLCs, the collaborative role is not as prominent.

When the collaborative data is cross-tabulated with demographic data, librarians at schools with a higher rate of FRL are less likely than their peers to participate in collaboration in PLC. Additional support may be needed in these schools to provide time and resources librarians may need to collaborate.

Librarians with a fixed schedule were also less likely to collaborate and be teaching partners. These fixed schedule librarians may also need more support in the form of planning time to meet with teachers. This needed support is also reflected in the way that fixed schedule librarians are much more likely to answer "never" for seven of the 12 tasks on the survey. These librarians may also need to explore alternatives to face-to-face meetings with teachers and explore options that allow virtual collaboration and communication. Fixed schedule librarians may also want to seek out a mentor with a fixed schedule who is finding ways to make their system work so that librarian standards may be more completely fulfilled. Ideally, fixed scheduling would be transitioned to flexible scheduling as is recommended in the AASL standards (2009).

PLC Type

The most popular PLC type where librarians participated are the core subject areas in which grade level PLCs were also included (43%). It might be likely that the core subject teachers are also the most likely to be higher traffic library uses, so the librarian is catering to the largest group of active patrons (Table 5).

The second most popular group of PLCs for librarians is leadership (28%). These PLCs include curriculum, school climate, and school improvement team. Being a leader is an important component of the librarians' position (AASL, 2009). With slightly less than a third of respondents indicating they are on a leadership PLC, combined with the

finding that many are taking on the role of leader within a PLC, further research may need to be done to determine how librarians are "leading from the center" as suggested in the standards (AASL, 2009).

Only 16% of respondents indicated they belonged to a PLC that focuses on technology. This may be attributed to there not being such a PLC at their school, so a future study may look to determine how schools as a whole are looking at technology integration and use. Are perhaps these topics being discussed in all PLCs rather than having a separate PLC for the subject?

A small number, only 9%, responded that they belonged to other, less traditional PLCs. Some of the answers to the open response question, however, indicated that the respondent may not know what makes a group a PLC. One response listed Linkedin.com, an online networking tool, as a PLC. Other indicated they were members of listservs, but the format of the listserv and the purpose of it may not make it a PLC as described by Richard DuFour and Robert Eaker in 1998. Some of the responses may be online support, networking, point-of-need advice, but they were not traditional PLCs.

The literature supports the claim that PLCs are beneficial, and this was supported by the survey results. The spread between the most popular perceived benefit and the least popular answer was from 85%-39%. Professional growth (85%) was the most commonly cited benefit with shared vision and goals within the school (76%) as the second more common response. At the bottom of the list was that time is well spent in PLCs, as results are valuable, but even this response was selected by 39% of respondents. It appears that most who took the survey do realize the benefits of PLCs.

Time is the largest obstacle librarians see in participating in PLCs (Table 7). There a number of factors that could be at play here. At some schools, PLCs are scheduled to all meet at the same time. It is impossible, even with multiple librarians, to attend all of the meetings with regularity. Librarians may be in a position to have to choose where to attend. Librarians may also be limited with time because they are assigned to a PLC that meets at the same time as other PLC. If administration is assigning the librarian to only meet with the English department, regardless of what the English department actually needs, the librarian may not have time to also get to other meetings.

The second most popular response that may also contribute to a librarian's time crunch is the demands of the media center (38%). With media center hours often beginning before the school day s begins and extending beyond the last bell, the librarian may be called upon to supervise students during these times. The media center may also be in use when teachers are using their different planning times to meet in PLC. The 6th grade science class, for example, may meet in the library while the 8th grade math PLC is meeting. Schools with only one librarian could not make this scenario work. One might also consider the demands of the library program itself. Librarians must find time to create budgets, do collection development, plan, and perform other maintenance duties. If the librarian is not required to take time to attend PLCs, that time may be being used to attend to administrative matters. Each of these areas could be investigated in future studies.

Similarly to the way fixed schedule librarians indicated they "never" do many of the tasks on the survey more often than their peers, fixed schedule librarians standout in their perceived obstacles. 39% of fixed scheduling respondents said that the fixed

schedule contributed to their inability to participate in PLCs (Table 8). Time was an obstacle for 61% of fixed schedule librarians. In comparison, only 39% of flexible schedule librarians and 48% of hybrid schedule librarians said time was an obstacle. Flexible schedule librarians were the most likely to say there are no obstacles to meeting in PLC, whereas only 7% of hybrid and 3% of fixed schedule say there are no obstacles.

The responses of librarians with fixed scheduling raises several questions about how a librarian can fulfill the roles ascribed in the literature and the AASL standards without the time to do so. It is apparent that more research needs to be done to determine if fixed scheduling and successful, full PLC participation can co-exist. Districts that require PLC participation but also have fixed schedule school libraries may want to reexamine their librarians' role so that it might be expanded to better serve the school community.

Study Limitations

There are a few questions that should have been included in the survey. Librarians were asked about library assistants, but were not asked how many librarians worked at their school. Librarians should have also been asked if they are active in at least one PLC on their school level. They were asked if PLCs were required or optional at their schools, but this did not give enough information for the analysis. PLC participation was determined by a combination of the PLC requirement question with an item that asked librarians to name the PLCs in which they participate. A librarian indicating that PLCs were not required at their school and not listing any PLCs in the open response question were assumed to not participate in any PLCs. Coding open response questions for the type of PLC librarians were involved in was also challenging, as some respondents

answered "All" or used acronyms to answer. Asking librarians to code their own PLC involvement may have been more accurate.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to gather data about what librarians are actually doing in PLCs. The exploratory nature of the study has revealed a number of areas where further research may be warranted. It is worth noting that some of the expected roles of the school library media specialist laid out in *Empowering Learners* are not necessarily being acted upon in the context of PLCs. A future survey with a truly random sample would be a good next step to explore these areas.

To put it into the words of one of the survey respondents, PLCs are “an important way to be seen as valuable.” If a librarian is not active in PLCs, how are standards being fulfilled? More importantly, however, is the school community, namely the students, being served if the librarian is not involved?

With 24% of respondents unaware of what is expected, there may also be a knowledge deficit by others at the school level. If librarians do not know their role, teachers and administrators aren’t likely to understand it either.

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Appendix A. Survey

School librarian participation in professional learning communities

Q1 What grade levels do you serve? (check all that apply)

- ❑ Pre-K (1)
- ❑ Kindergarten (2)
- ❑ 1 (3)
- ❑ 2 (4)
- ❑ 3 (5)
- ❑ 4 (6)
- ❑ 5 (7)
- ❑ 6 (8)
- ❑ 7 (9)
- ❑ 8 (10)
- ❑ 9 (11)
- ❑ 10 (12)
- ❑ 11 (13)
- ❑ 12 (14)

Q2 What is your school's enrollment?

- ❍ Under 200 (1)
- ❍ 201-500 (2)
- ❍ 501-800 (3)
- ❍ 801-1100 (4)
- ❍ 1101-1400 (5)
- ❍ greater than 1400 (6)

Q3 How many classroom teachers work in your school?

- ❍ 10 or less (1)
- ❍ 11-20 (2)
- ❍ 21-40 (3)
- ❍ 41-60 (4)
- ❍ 61 or more (5)

Q4 Do you consider your school population to be primarily...
- Urban (1)
- Suburban (2)
- Rural (3)

Q5 What is the approximate percentage of students receiving Free and Reduced Lunch at your school?
- Fewer than 20% (1)
- 21-50% (2)
- Greater than 50% (3)

Q6 How long have you worked as a librarian in your current school? Fill in the blank with the number of years completed. (First year=0, Second year=1)

Q7 How long have you worked as a school librarian? Fill in the blank with the number of years completed. (First year=0, Second year=1)

Q8 Do you have a library assistant?
- No (1)
- Yes, 1 and he/she is full-time (2)
- Yes, 1 and he/she is part-time (3)
- Yes, more than one full-time (4)
- Yes, more than one part-time (5)
- Yes, a combination of full- and part-time (6)

Q9 Do you have a flexible schedule?
- Yes, it is flexible. (1)
- No, it is a fixed schedule. (2)
- No, it is a hybrid, partially fixed and flexible. (3)

Q10 Is PLC participation required in your school?
- Yes, for everyone (1)
- Yes, for teachers only (2)
- No, participation is optional (3)
- There are no PLCs at my school. (4)

Q11 Please list the PLCs in your school of which you are an active member.

Q12 Please rate the frequency with which the following statements apply: When participating in a PLC at my school, I...

Provide knowledge to PLC members by providing relevant professional literature and research. (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Prepare for meetings by reading professional literature to anticipate topics or "jump start" conversation. (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Provide mini-lessons or training to a PLC at their request to address a specific need. (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Provide honest, positive and/or critical feedback to PLC members regarding instruction or planning. (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Co-plan a unit with a teacher(s) in a PLC. (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Create an assessment(s) within a PLC. (6)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Help teachers integrate technology into their instruction. (7)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Teach a portion of a unit co-planned with a teacher. (8)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Set the agenda for a PLC meeting. (9)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Take responsibility for extra assignments from the PLC, above and beyond what is normally expected. (10)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Offer alternative teaching strategies or assessment strategies to address different learning styles or needs. (11)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Meet with a PLC after the completion of a collaboratively taught unit to refine lessons or make adjustments to the unit plan for future practice. (12)	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q16 How do you keep up with what is happening within PLCs at your school? (Check all that apply)

- ❑ Minutes and agendas are posted to a management system like Blackboard, etc. (1)
- ❑ Meet regularly with PLC team leaders (2)
- ❑ Attend school improvement team meetings, or leadership meetings (3)
- ❑ Minutes and agendas are distributed through email (4)
- ❑ Other, please specify: (5) _____

Q15 Please provide a description of one of your most successful experiences working within a PLC. If you have never worked within a PLC, please write "N/A."

Q17 What do you see as the greatest benefit of participating in PLCs? (Check all that apply)

- ❑ Personal growth (1)
- ❑ Professional growth (2)
- ❑ Improved student achievement (3)
- ❑ Shared vision and goals within the school (4)
- ❑ Less isolation (5)
- ❑ Feeling supported by the administration (6)
- ❑ Increased communication among staff (7)
- ❑ Focus on the student (8)
- ❑ Collaborative atmosphere (9)
- ❑ Building relationships (10)
- ❑ Focus on results (11)
- ❑ Shared responsibility (12)
- ❑ Time is well spent, as results are valuable (13)
- ❑ Other, please specify: (14) _____

Q18 What is the greatest obstacle preventing you from participating in PLCs? (Check all that apply)

- ❑ Time (1)
- ❑ Demands of the media center (2)
- ❑ Fixed scheduling (3)
- ❑ Lack of administrative support (4)
- ❑ Unfamiliarity with the role of the librarian in PLCs (5)
- ❑ Lack of interest (6)
- ❑ Don't see a role for the librarian in classroom teacher PLCs (7)
- ❑ Lack of confidence (8)
- ❑ Lack of success in the past (9)
- ❑ None. There are no obstacles. (10)
- ❑ Other, please specify: (11) _____

Q19 Do you participate in a PLC for librarians? Check all that apply.

- ❑ Yes, in my school. (1)
- ❑ Yes, outside of my school or virtually. (2)
- ❑ No. (3)

Q20 Please provide a brief description of the PLC population and the types of topics and issues the PLC addresses.

Appendix B. Cross-tabulation of "Sometimes" or "Often" responses to survey question # with demographic factors

Table B.1. Respondents indicating "Often" or "Sometimes" on PLC tasks

Task	Role	School Enrollment				
		201-500	501-800	801-1100	1101-1400	Over 1400
Provide knowledge to PLC members by providing relevant professional literature and research.	IS	94%	78%	73%	80%	93%
Prepare for meetings by reading professional literature to anticipate topics or "jump start" conversation.	IS	69%	63%	60%	60%	79%
Provide mini-lessons or training to a PLC at their request to address a specific need.	SD	47%	47%	53%	47%	57%
Provide honest, positive and/or critical feedback to PLC members regarding instruction or planning.	CFRL	75%	63%	87%	60%	86%
Co-plan a unit with a teacher(s) in a PLC.	CTP	66%	56%	60%	67%	79%
Create an assessment(s) within a PLC.	CTP	50%	34%	33%	27%	57%
Help teachers integrate technology into their instruction.	CTP	72%	72%	73%	73%	86%
Teach a portion of a unit co-planned with a teacher.	CTP	56%	53%	67%	73%	57%
Set the agenda for a PLC meeting.	L	41%	41%	13%	20%	57%
Take responsibility for extra assignments from the PLC, above and beyond what is normally expected.	L	81%	72%	67%	80%	79%
Offer alternative teaching strategies or assessment strategies to address different learning styles or needs.	SA	69%	66%	40%	60%	79%
Meet with a PLC after the completion of a collaboratively taught unit to refine lessons or make adjustments to the unit plan for future practice.	CFRL	47%	47%	40%	40%	50%

Table B.2. Respondents indicating "Often" or "Sometimes" on PLC tasks

Task	Role	Classroom Teachers			
		11-20	21-40	41-60	Over 60
Provide knowledge to PLC members by providing relevant professional literature and research.	IS	100%	79%	89%	82%
Prepare for meetings by reading professional literature to anticipate topics or "jump start" conversation.	IS	92%	55%	68%	67%
Provide mini-lessons or training to a PLC at their request to address a specific need.	SD	62%	47%	53%	46%
Provide honest, positive and/or critical feedback to PLC members regarding instruction or planning.	CFRL	100%	63%	58%	79%
Co-plan a unit with a teacher(s) in a PLC.	CTP	69%	55%	74%	64%
Create an assessment(s) within a PLC.	CTP	62%	37%	32%	41%
Help teachers integrate technology into their instruction.	CTP	69%	71%	79%	74%
Teach a portion of a unit co-planned with a teacher.	CTP	69%	47%	63%	64%
Set the agenda for a PLC meeting.	L	38%	45%	16%	36%
Take responsibility for extra assignments from the PLC, above and beyond what is normally expected.	L	100%	79%	68%	69%
Offer alternative teaching strategies or assessment strategies to address different learning styles or needs.	SA	77%	66%	53%	62%
Meet with a PLC after the completion of a collaboratively taught unit to refine lessons or make adjustments to the unit plan for future practice.	CFRL	46%	42%	53%	44%

Table B.3. Respondents indicating "Often" or "Sometimes" on PLC tasks

Task	Role	Setting		
		Urban	Suburban	Rural
Provide knowledge to PLC members by providing relevant professional literature and research.	IS	91%	79%	86%
Prepare for meetings by reading professional literature to anticipate topics or "jump start" conversation.	IS	59%	64%	71%
Provide mini-lessons or training to a PLC at their request to address a specific need.	SD	36%	55%	49%
Provide honest, positive and/or critical feedback to PLC members regarding instruction or planning.	CFRL	82%	72%	69%
Co-plan a unit with a teacher(s) in a PLC.	CTP	64%	68%	54%
Create an assessment(s) within a PLC.	CTP	23%	49%	37%
Help teachers integrate technology into their instruction.	CTP	68%	75%	74%
Teach a portion of a unit co-planned with a teacher.	CTP	55%	62%	57%
Set the agenda for a PLC meeting.	L	23%	40%	37%
Take responsibility for extra assignments from the PLC, above and beyond what is normally expected.	L	59%	79%	80%
Offer alternative teaching strategies or assessment strategies to address different learning styles or needs.	SA	82%	60%	54%
Meet with a PLC after the completion of a collaboratively taught unit to refine lessons or make adjustments to the unit plan for future practice.	CFRL	45%	49%	37%

Table B.4. Respondents indicating "Often" or "Sometimes" on PLC tasks

Task	Role	FRL		
		<20%	20-50%	Over 50%
Provide knowledge to PLC members by providing relevant professional literature and research.	IS	82%	79%	95%
Prepare for meetings by reading professional literature to anticipate topics or "jump start" conversation.	IS	69%	62%	64%
Provide mini-lessons or training to a PLC at their request to address a specific need.	SD	49%	57%	36%
Provide honest, positive and/or critical feedback to PLC members regarding instruction or planning.	CFRL	76%	74%	64%
Co-plan a unit with a teacher(s) in a PLC.	CTP	64%	74%	41%
Create an assessment(s) within a PLC.	CTP	44%	48%	18%
Help teachers integrate technology into their instruction.	CTP	69%	79%	73%
Teach a portion of a unit co-planned with a teacher.	CTP	53%	74%	41%
Set the agenda for a PLC meeting.	L	33%	40%	32%
Take responsibility for extra assignments from the PLC, above and beyond what is normally expected.	L	78%	74%	73%
Offer alternative teaching strategies or assessment strategies to address different learning styles or needs.	SA	49%	71%	73%
Meet with a PLC after the completion of a collaboratively taught unit to refine lessons or make adjustments to the unit plan for future practice.	CFRL	44%	57%	23%

Table B.5. Respondents indicating "Often" or "Sometimes" on PLC tasks

Task	Role	Career Exp			
		0-4	5-9	10-19	20 or more
Provide knowledge to PLC members by providing relevant professional literature and research.	IS	84%	75%	86%	94%
Prepare for meetings by reading professional literature to anticipate topics or "jump start" conversation.	IS	68%	63%	60%	82%
Provide mini-lessons or training to a PLC at their request to address a specific need.	SD	32%	47%	57%	53%
Provide honest, positive and/or critical feedback to PLC members regarding instruction or planning.	CFRL	74%	63%	76%	82%
Co-plan a unit with a teacher(s) in a PLC.	CTP	58%	47%	67%	88%
Create an assessment(s) within a PLC.	CTP	32%	47%	36%	47%
Help teachers integrate technology into their instruction.	CTP	74%	78%	62%	94%
Teach a portion of a unit co-planned with a teacher.	CTP	58%	53%	64%	59%
Set the agenda for a PLC meeting.	L	26%	31%	38%	47%
Take responsibility for extra assignments from the PLC, above and beyond what is normally expected.	L	79%	75%	74%	76%
Offer alternative teaching strategies or assessment strategies to address different learning styles or needs.	SA	68%	56%	64%	65%
Meet with a PLC after the completion of a collaboratively taught unit to refine lessons or make adjustments to the unit plan for future practice.	CFRL	42%	44%	43%	53%

Table B.6. Respondents indicating "Often" or "Sometimes" on PLC tasks

Task	Role	Tenure		
		0-4	5-9	10 or more
Provide knowledge to PLC members by providing relevant professional literature and research.	IS	82%	76%	93%
Prepare for meetings by reading professional literature to anticipate topics or "jump start" conversation.	IS	64%	66%	67%
Provide mini-lessons or training to a PLC at their request to address a specific need.	SD	42%	62%	47%
Provide honest, positive and/or critical feedback to PLC members regarding instruction or planning.	CFRL	70%	69%	80%
Co-plan a unit with a teacher(s) in a PLC.	CTP	62%	52%	77%
Create an assessment(s) within a PLC.	CTP	32%	45%	47%
Help teachers integrate technology into their instruction.	CTP	72%	76%	73%
Teach a portion of a unit co-planned with a teacher.	CTP	64%	55%	57%
Set the agenda for a PLC meeting.	L	28%	38%	43%
Take responsibility for extra assignments from the PLC, above and beyond what is normally expected.	L	68%	76%	87%
Offer alternative teaching strategies or assessment strategies to address different learning styles or needs.	SA	62%	62%	63%
Meet with a PLC after the completion of a collaboratively taught unit to refine lessons or make adjustments to the unit plan for future practice.	CFRL	50%	38%	43%

Table B.7. Respondents indicating "Often" or "Sometimes" on PLC tasks

Task	Role	Schedule Type		
		Flexible	Fixed	Hybrid
Provide knowledge to PLC members by providing relevant professional literature and research.	IS	85%	86%	78%
Prepare for meetings by reading professional literature to anticipate topics or "jump start" conversation.	IS	72%	52%	59%
Provide mini-lessons or training to a PLC at their request to address a specific need.	SD	55%	43%	41%
Provide honest, positive and/or critical feedback to PLC members regarding instruction or planning.	CFRL	72%	71%	74%
Co-plan a unit with a teacher(s) in a PLC.	CTP	70%	43%	59%
Create an assessment(s) within a PLC.	CTP	37%	33%	48%
Help teachers integrate technology into their instruction.	CTP	78%	57%	78%
Teach a portion of a unit co-planned with a teacher.	CTP	65%	38%	59%
Set the agenda for a PLC meeting.	L	33%	29%	44%
Take responsibility for extra assignments from the PLC, above and beyond what is normally expected.	L	73%	71%	81%
Offer alternative teaching strategies or assessment strategies to address different learning styles or needs.	SA	60%	52%	74%
Meet with a PLC after the completion of a collaboratively taught unit to refine lessons or make adjustments to the unit plan for future practice.	CFRL	45%	24%	56%